Reviewer's report

Title: Translating language and culture: A key issue in international public health research

Version: 2 Date: 24 March 2005

Reviewer: Jeanine Blackford

Reviewer's report:

General
Generally the paper has a clearer focus now on the issue of working with interpreters.

Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)

Transcription & analysis
I continue to have difficulty accepting the analysis presented in this section. From my perspective the differences in translation from the lay interpreter and the independent interpreter appear significant to the study. Alteration of the woman’s words alters understanding of their ‘journey of care’. If it requires an uncle to pursue staff to arrange an ambulance then that is quite different to an impression that the hospital arranged it. It is important to look for the alternative possibility: What would have happened to this woman if a relative were not strong enough to argue the case. Consider the gendered relationship between an uncle (man) and presumably with nurses (women) and whether this has the potential to impact on journey of care.

There is not a strong enough argument to dismiss the differences in translation as not significant. I agree it is well argued in the discussion but I am not clear why it is not significant to your study. Further information from the authors may assist the reader to understand.

Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)

There are minor editorial issues on sentence construction and use of tense.

ABSTRACT
Methods - Past tense required as research is completed; Conclusion “The last sentence not clear whether you mean authors or researchers.
PAPER
Introduction: First sentence to the paper is unnecessary. Start with 2nd sentence and merge with following paragraph.

Method: The first sentence is clumsy. It requires to be reworded or the first phrase deleted.

Case Study details does not appear to be the correct heading to reflect the content of this section.

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

Class: In the discussion you acknowledge gender and briefly discuss insider/outsider status. I would have thought it was quite a significant difference to acknowledge difference in class between the interpreter and participants. Given the interpreter was well educated and able to speak and write English suggests she held a different class position. The lay interpreter’s translation of the
women’s language to medical language is also a concern. Such action suggests the possibility that the interpreter was not only translating language and culture but also class between illiterate participants through master prepared to PhD student - bridging the classes?

**What next?:** Unable to decide on acceptance or rejection until the authors have responded to the major compulsory revisions

**Level of interest:** An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**Statistical review:** No

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare that I have no competing interests